

BRITISH METHODISTS PLAY POLITICS

July 29, 1996 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The New Testament churches were not political institutions, nor were the pastors of the apostolic churches allowed to practice politics in their ministries. The one objective required of them by God was to be faithful to the body of truth which was delivered to them by the Apostles. Consider Paul's instruction to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, THE SAME commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Titus was told: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Titus 2:15). These early church leaders had no authority to compromise the truth they had been given. They could not build doctrine by consensus. They could not determine their objectives by democratic processes. They could only be faithful to the Word of God.

On the other hand, politics is the art of compromise. To be an effective politician, a man must be adept at the give and take which is an essential part of democratic human government. When we say that someone is "a good politician," it is not necessarily a compliment!

The denominational structures, contrary to the express will of God, owe their existence to a certain amount of politics. They must be willing to compromise Scriptural convictions for the sake denominational harmony. This was evident in the annual meeting of British Methodists in late June. The nearly 600 delegates practiced the fine art of diplomacy in order to keep the denomination together, and in the process, they voted against the Word of God.

One issue which was hotly debated was that of homosexuality. According to the newly elected president of the British Methodist Conference, Nigel Collinson: "There is a deep difference of opinion between us ... it cuts right to the middle ground of the church." "Collinson's comments came after several heated debates over 'clarification' of the church's existing stance on the issue. Those pressing for clarification contended that the current statement is ambiguous and contradictory. It both forbids active homosexuals from becoming ministers, at the same time it affirms the ministry and participation of lesbians and gay men in the church" (United Methodist News Service, July 9, 1996).

A church statement on something which is clearly addressed in Scripture should never be "ambiguous and contradictory." This happens, rather, when people need to compromise and play politics with the Word of God.

The British Methodist delegates voted AGAINST a resolution to prohibit sending same sex couples to the mission field! Why? "The unspoken, yet clear concern of many delegates was the fear of a split, a denominational rift most Methodists do not want and can ill afford" (Ibid.).

Another issue with which the British Methodist delegates played the politics was Freemasonry. This organization, with its secret rituals and esoteric philosophy, is built upon the unscriptural thesis that all religions lead to God and that all men are children of God. The Bible plainly forbids God's people to yoke together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Yet the British Methodists could not make a plain statement exposing the error of Freemasonry because of their fear of disunity. Collinson told the delegates that they needed "to draw back from the chasm." He warned that a firm stand against homosexuality, Freemasonry, and other issues could do "immense damage to the future of Methodism."

On the issue of the "Laughing Revival" or the so-called "Toronto Blessing," the British Methodist delegates accepted a report which urged "patience before making statements or forming judgments." How patient are we to be in the face of such unscriptural nonsense as "Holy Ghost bartenders" and "being drunk with the spirit" and "spirit slaying" and "uncontrollable laughter"?

The same delegates "voted to allow Methodist-related charities to apply for national lottery funding grants if the circumstances are exceptional." Can you imagine the Apostles applying to Caesar for money from the proceeds from national gambling institutions!

In the Bible we have the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints (Jude 3), but these churches refuses to stand unhesitatingly upon it. They love, rather, to play politics with the eternal Word of God.

Beware of church politicians.